Swollen Trial Lake May Threaten Provo

By LISA MOTE
Herald Staff Writer
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The water level in Trial Lake is the highest on record, threatening to flood the Provo River this spring.

Officials of the Provo River Water Users' Association, however, have lowered the level of Deer Creek Reservoir and hope to prevent major flooding.

Jack Gardner, superintendent of the association, said the water level at Trial Lake, which is at the head of the Provo River, was 48.3 inches as of April 22.

"The water is the highest it's ever been as far as any record I know of," he said. In 1982 the level was 41.3 inches and in 1983 it was 36 inches.

Because the level is at 48.3 inches this year, the association has lowered the level of Deer Creek Reservoir.

Gardner said his studies show about 60,000 acre-feet of water need to be released from the reservoir before peak runoff. Deer Creek has been drawn down to about [illegible] acre-feet.

The extra volume will provide space for storage of the runoff water this spring, he said.

Merrill Bingham, Provo's Water and Wastewater director, said the only major flooding danger in Provo this year comes from the river. Without the water users' help, "we would be looking at flooding along the river without a doubt. With that storage, we may get through without any serious problems."

With the extra space, officials at the reservoir can control the amount of water flowing down the river and prevent gravel fills that slow the river flow, Gardner said.

Even with the precautions, however, it is possible the runoff water will come faster than Deer Creek can take care of it, Gardner said. "I don't know what will happen. I've never seen this much water on Trial Lake."

In 1983, it was hard to control the runoff water when it all came out of Trial Lake in 40 days. With the higher water level this year, if all the water comes down in 40 days, the peak flows would be hard to control.

Trial Lake

The Daily Herald

112TH YEAR, NO. 268 PROVO, UTAH, MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1986 $6.00 A MONTH — PRICE 25 CENTS

Jim Hills photo

UDOT workers take a break Sunday from cleaning up the edges of washed-out SR 150 as the Provo River continues to flow.

Trial Lake dam fails

Officials assess flood damage

Dan Symms, U.S. Forest Service, photo

An aerial view shows the break in a dike at Trial Lake.

By PATRICK CHRISTIAN
Herald Staff Writer

Authorities this morning were still trying to assess the damage left in the wake of a wall of water rushed down the upper Provo River when a section of the Trial Lake earthen dike failed in Summit County this past weekend.

Early reports indicated damage in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, but authorities said they believe the immediate danger is over even though most of the water remains in the lake.

Trial Lake is the source of the Provo River. A torrent of water water was channeled down that waterway Friday around midnight ripping through at least five sections of State Road 150 and raging through four campgrounds, stranding some campers who all managed to escape without injury.

Early Saturday morning, rescuers rushed to the campgrounds located in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest to help stranded campers.

While the amount of water that escaped from Trial Lake was enough do considerable damage just below the dam, authorities said it's had minimal effect on levels in the Provo River or Deer Creek Resevoir in Wasatch County. Harold Ford the chief operator at Deer Creek Reservoir said, "It hasn't affected us at all. It was not enough (water) to bother anything at all."

Other authorities said the majority of the water in Trial Lake is still there. Those downstream of the affected campgrounds were evacuated and are not in danger, they said.

"There's a lot of people up here this morning from different agencies forming a damage-assessment team," said Dan Symms, a recreation specialist with the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. He said he was the first U.S. Forest Service official to arrive at the scene.

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